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A MIDNIGHT MISTAKE.

A MELO-DRAMA,

IN FOUR ACTS,

—BY—

A. J. MUNSON.

—o—

— TO WHICH IS ADDED —

A DESCRIPTION OF THE COSTUMES—CAST OF THE CHARACTERS—ENTRANCES AND EXITS—RELATIVE POSITIONS OF THE PERFORMERS ON THE STAGE, AND THE WHOLE OF THE STAGE BUSINESS.

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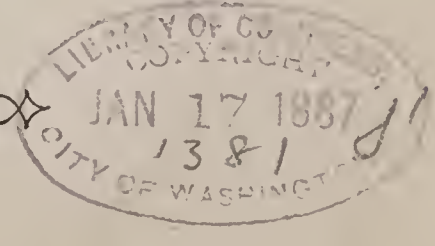

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A MIDNIGHT MISTAKE.

PS635
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CHARACTERS.

JOHN SIMON..... *A broker and manufacturer*

HARRY SLOAN..... *A villain's victim*

HERBERT HONEYTON..... *A book-keeper*

PHILIP DARBEEN..... *A detective*

JOSE DeLEON..... *A Spaniard*

PETER..... *Darkey, Jack of all trades*

EVALENA SLOAN..... *Sloan's daughter*

JULIA HONEYTON..... *Herbert's sister*

COSTUMES—MODERN.

TIME OF PERFORMANCE—1 1-2 HOURS.

[redacted]

TIME—THE PRESENT DAY.

A MIDNIGHT MISTAKE.

—x—

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*Broker's Office—desk or table up* C., *with books and writing material on it—necessary chairs—other office properties attainable* —HERBERT *discovered at desk writing. Music at rise of curtain, which continues until* SIMON *comes on.*

Enter SIMON, L. 2 E.

Simon. Herbert, has Harry Sloan called during my absence?

Herbert. He has not, sir.

Sim. Then you may lay aside your work for to-day, as I shall not need you this evening.

Her. I am thankful for the liberty, Mr. Simon, as I have an engagement.

Sim. (*sits*) With some charmer of the gentler sex, I presume. Am I not right?

Her. You certainly are. And as we have drifted upon this subject, I wish to ask for an increase of salary, as I intend taking upon myself the responsibilities of matrimony.

Sim. Indeed!

Her. Yes. My love has been reciprocated by the object of my admiration, so all that prevents our immediate union is an increase in my salary.

Sim. Well, Herbert, I think I can obviate your difficulty. Business has been brisk of late. But speaking of love, do you really believe in the existance of such an element as love?

Her. (*rising*) Believe in love? Love, the grandest passion with which mankind is endowed—the foundation of our existence, and the supporting pillar of civilization? Yes! who can but believe it!

Sim. My question may seem strange to you, but I have come to look upon love as a farce or a tantalizing, presumptive yoke to be taken upon oneself while in the pursuit of certain ends, and when these are gained to be cast aside like a worn out glove.

Her. Then you have never experienced love—never been under its magic influence.

Sim. If love be a passion, such as you will have it, I have not, nor do I desire to.

Her. Then I suppose you will leave your alloted share to me. But I must go. You will consider the subject of which I spoke?

Sim. I have already—your salary shall be doubled.

Her. Thanks, and a pleasant evening to you, sir.

(*takes hat and exits* C.

Sim. (*looks at his watch—rising*) Ten minutes past six, and Sloan

not here! What can detain him? He promised to be here at five o'cloek, and he has kept me waiting more than an hour. Can it be possible that he is trying to evade me? If so—(*looks off* L.) Ah, here he comes!

Enter SLOAN, L. 2 E.

Sloan, old boy, do you know that by your non-appearance at the appointed hour I was beginning to question your promptness. (*sets chairs—both sit*)

Sloan. I beg pardon for my tardiness, on the grounds that your business at the mills detained me. But since I am here now, dispose of whatever business you may have with me, that I may depart for home.

Sim. Well, I suppose you remember the contract existing between us, concerning Evalena, that when she should come of sufficient age she should become my wife? I have therefore requested you to call here to inform you that I consider the time at hand, when I, with propriety in the sight of society, can take her as my wife.

Sloan. I well remember that there was an agreement between us, but I have thought for many years that it was but an ephemeral fancy of yours, and that you had long since blotted it from memory.

Sim. Sloan, you mistake the nature of my character. Do you suppose I could blot from memory an object which is to be the crowning glory to my success? No! It is to-day, and has been all these years, as firmly imbedded in my memory as if the contract was made but yesterday.

Sloan. And you are determined to sacrificing Evalena in order to obtain this crowning glory?

Sim. I am determined upon making Evalena my wife, and to extend to her an honorable position in the world. And I suppose, according to another clause in our agreement, you have prepared her for the event?

Sloan. No, I have not.

Sim. What! Did I not advise you time after time to constantly keep this matter before her as the paramount object of her life? And now I find that you, who are living at my mercy only, have disobeyed my orders.

Sloan. But, my dear Simon, she has lived so happily of late years, and enjoyed life so well, that I could not possibly mar her happiness by even alluding to a subject that would be a frightful specter to her, much less keep it constantly before her.

Sim. Sir! what do you mean by a "frightful specter?"

Sloan. I mean that were I to tell her that I desired her to marry you it would be a frightful specter to her, from which she would start back in horror.

Sim. Harry Sloan, I advise you to be more prudent in your expressions, and to comply with my desires!

Sloan. But if she should dote upon another?

Sim. That other must be set to one side out of the way. But I hope that a man in your position in life, or rather between life and death, has not allowed another to pay attentions to Evalena—the straw for your reseue.

Sloan. Alas, it is the case.

Sim. And who is the plumed knight that has crossed my path, and thwarts my purpose?

Sloan. Herbert Honeyton.

Sim. What! my book-keeper?

Sloan. The same. For some time they have been in each other's company, and I doubt not but that an engagement exists between them. Even this evening he waits upon her. It would be a pity to separate them.

Sim. Pity be hanged! Do you suppose I will be thwarted in my purpose by my book-keeper? By a simpleton like Herbert Honeyton, who is nothing else than a beggar, subsisting on what I allow him? No! I hold a mortgage on his home that has been due over two years; to-morrow I shall enter proceedings for its foreclosure, and discharge him from my employ—he will then be a homeless beggar. I think that will cool their love. And, Harry Sloan, as you value your honor and life—as you value the honor of your family, I charge you to use your influence, so that my plan, as to making Evalena my wife, may be executed. And, remember, that on the day she becomes my wife I will give you a check for ten thousand dollars—that day to come one week from to-day. But should you not succeed, or should you use your influence to the contrary, I will deliver you, and the evidence against you in my possession, to the authorities, and let them settle with you.

Sloan. John Simon, you are an unscrupulous, base villain, to thus take advantage of me time after time because you have me in your power. For eighteen years you have, as you claim, held my life in your hands, and drove me to do your base bidding. I need not tell you what a life these eighteen years have been to me. The misery and anguish I have endured is sufficient atonement for any crime I may have committed, be it ever so foul. I have done your bidding, and you have profitted in dollars and cents, but the task you now set for me—to tear from a young girl's bosom her fondest hopes—I cannot, nor will not perform. I can no longer comply with your base desires, where human happiness is at stake. When I committed the act for which you have me in your power, I done so only in fear of the foul justice you were threatening to bring me to. I would rather suffer a hundred deaths than to live another eighteen years like the past. So if you intend sacrificing me to your whims, do so now—I am ready. (*rises and paces stage*)

Sim. (*rising*) Perhaps not quite so ready as you presume. But can you not plead my case to Evalena? Perhaps she will relent. (*aside*) I must proceed carefully.

Sloan. Yes, I can, and will; but I will not guarantee you the desired results. (*looking off*, L.) But here comes Evalena now, evidently in search of me. You can plead your own case, and if I can assist you I will.

Enter EVALENA, L. 2 E.

Evalena. Good evening, Mr. Simon. Papa, I became frightened at your absence beyond the usual hour, and thought you might have met with some accident at the mills, so I came to look for you, and how fortunate that I should find you so soon, and realize that my apprehensions were without foundation.

Sloan. Business always before pleasure, my dear.

Sim. Miss Sloan, it perhaps becomes me to beg pardon for being at least indirectly the cause of your alarm, as I detained Mr. Sloan for an interview; and as you are deeply connected with the same, it is but just that you are made acqainted with its import. Miss Sloan, it is unnecessary for me to tell you that our acquaintance from your childhood up, has led me to admire you with such affection as a zealous lover only can. I have riches beyond my desires, and can give you a pleasant home with all possible luxuries. I have just spoken to Mr. Sloan, and gained his consent, and I now await your answer—will you give the crowning point to my happiness by becoming my wife?

Evalena. Mr. Simon, your offer is as frank as it is unexpected, and I will give you a frank answer in return. I can never learn to love you with that affection which alone leads to happiness in wedded life—therefore I must answer no.

Sim. And will you not take your father's desires on this question into consideration?

Evalena. I do not think his desires in this case are intrinsically in accordance with yours, Mr. Simon. Are they, father?

Sloan. If your heart could prompt you to accept Mr. Simon, they would be.

Evalena. And as my heart does not prompt me, it must be as I have said—no!

Sim. Miss Sloan, I know the case from beginning to end. Herbert Honeyton is without employment and a home; I shall discharge him at once, and to-morrow a mortgage on his house for several thousand dollars, will be protested and foreclosed. So you should consider well before you refuse my offer.

Evalena. Let Herbert Honeyton be a homeless beggar, he nevertheless will remain an honorable man. And I doubt not but that *you* are the cause of his misfortunes. If these expressions are to be taken as evidence of your love, I can but loathe you instead of respecting you. You till have my answer, *no!*

Sim. Evalena, as you love and respect your father, and desire his welfare, I ask you to change your answer.

Evalena. Father! My father? What do you mean, sir?

Sim. I mean that it depends on your answer to my proposal whether your father goes to the gallows. (EVALENA *starts with surprise and fear*)

Sloan. (*writhing*) Oh, Simon, do not be so cruel!

Sim. I am not cruel. But, Miss Sloan, it is nevertheless a fact that I have proof and evidence in my possession, which, if brought to light, would condemn your father to death. On one condition will I surrender these documents, and that is that you become my wife—otherwise he is doomed.

Evalena. (*throwing arms about* SLOAN'S *neck*) Oh, father! father! can this be true? Can it be possible? Tell me it is false!

Sloan. Alas, poor child, it is true that he has me in his power, that he has such proofs against me. But doubt not my innocence, although circumstances are against me.

Evalena. (*releasing him*) And must I believe this terrible confession? But, father, with what crime are you charged? Can your innocence not be proven?

Sloan. I cannot tell you now of the nature of the charge preferred against me, and my innocence, which I cannot prove. You

must wait with me for the righteous verdict which will sooner or later come. But you shall not sacrifice your happiness to save my miserable life.

Evalena. (*aside*) Oh, Heavens! how dark my former bright path now seems! Must I accept him?—Yes! (*aloud*) Father, for your sake I will accept him.

Sim. (*triumphantly*) And is that your final answer, Miss Sloan?

Evalena. (*deliberately*) For the sake of saving one whom I love better than my life, I answer yes. I give you my hand (*extends hand to* SIMON) and the enmity of my heart.

Sim. (*triumphantly*) Evalena, you will never regret the step you have just taken; and as for the enmity of your heart, you will change that in time.

Evalena. My feelings towards you will never change. But, father, I must be alone with my thoughts—come with me home.

Sloan. Yes, child. (*goes up.* EVALENA *exits*, L. 2 E.

Sim. Sloan, stay a moment. (SLOAN *returns*) Do you suppose she will keep her promise just made to me?

Sloan. Even though *she* will, *I* will not! Evalena shall never be the bride of a base villain as long as I can prevent it, come what will. You hear, John Simon, *never!* Herbert Honeyton is her choice, and Herbert it shall be, unless you take my life.

Sim. (*aside*) Can it be possible! Yes! Ah, I have it. (*aloud*) I heed not your opposition! Begone! Evalena shall be mine, and if you interfere, you shall be made to feel the weighty arm of the law! Go your way. (SLOAN *exits*, L. 2 E.) I cannot understand that fellow. I have him in my power, yet I dislike his severe objection to my suit. If that simpleton, Herbert, was out of the way, I would be safe. Money is powerful—I will see Jose DeLeon. I have sworn to marry this girl, and I will do so at all hazards. Here comes that nigger—just in time to do an errand for me.

Enter PETER, L. 2 E.

Ah! philosopher of the streets, how fares it with thee to-day?

Peter. (*angrily*) Say, boss, I'se no grasshopper, I'se a 'spectful gemmen of color, I is!

Sim. You misunderstand me, Peter; I said philosopher.

Peter. Oh, yeah! I understand—a pail-slop-o-ser. Dat is to say, a man what carries slop around to people in a pail. Yeah! dat am all right, boss—I'm one of 'em!

Sim. Correct, Peter. But do you know where Jose DeLeon, the Spaniard, is at present?

Peter. Oh, yes! I just saw him ober at de corner saloon.

Sim. Go and tell him to come to my office immediately. (PETER *goes up stage and stands, thinking*) Why don't you go?

Peter. Well, you see, boss, I'se sometimes troubled wid a dry throat, and I feel it a comin' on now, so I'se afraid by the time I get thar I'll be choked and can't say nuffin'. You haven't such a thing as a quarter about you, have you?

Sim. Ah, Peter, you're a sharp one. (*hands coin*) Now go.

Peter. (*going*) Here's ter yer health, boss. (*exit*, L. 2 E.

Sim. Herbert Honeyton must be got out of my way. I cannot afford to lose Evalena and the legacy of millions that will be hers. It will be a high game to play, but I have handled high cards before.

Enter JULIA, L. 2 E., *in traveling costume.*

(*aside—fiendishly*) The devil!

Julia. Oh, dear John, I am so glad I found you. (*exchange greetings according to taste of audience—country or city*)

Sim. Julia, dear, what brings you to the city so unexpectedly?

Julia. Philip Darbeen, the detective, has been engaged by my brother to hunt me and the man of my choice—therefore, heeding your advice to keep our union a secret until you should be ready to have it made public, I have come to learn what you would have me do.

Sim. (*excitedly*) Do you mean to say Philip Darbeen is actually on our trail?

Julia. Yes, dear. He has shadowed me for some time, and yesterday he called at the hotel and made several enquiries of the clerk concerning me.

Sim. Do you know whether he suspects me as your husband?

Julia. From what I have learned I think not.

Sim. Well, my dear, I am expecting a man here on business soon, so you had better go the hotel to avoid further discoveries. I will try to see you this evening, or in the morning, and we will then determine upon what course of action to take. Be a good girl and keep quiet, and all will be well.

Julia. I will, but come soon, for the suspense is terrible.

(*Exit*, L. 2 E.

Sim. If Philip Darbeen is on my trail I must proceed shrewdly, in order to outwit him. If I can hurry my union with Evalena, before any discoveries are made, I can defy the world and its detectives. It will be an easy matter to cast off Julia when the proper time comes; but I must send her away from the city or she may thwart my plans with Evalena. Confound it! this business is rather intricate.

Enter JOSE DELEON, L. 2 E.

DeL. Ah, senor, you called me?

Sim. Yes, my dear DeLeon. Be seated. (*places chairs at table—both sit*) I have become entangled in a little difficulty, and need assistance.

DeL. (*thoughtfully*) I understand—make known your trouble.

Sim. You know Herbert Honeyton, my book-keeper?

DeL. Yes, senor.

Sim. He must die. Do you want the job?

DeL. It's a bad job. How much will you pay.

Sim. State your figures, but be reasonable, as I have no money to throw away.

DeL. How shall the deed be done?

Sim. He has an engagement with Evalena Sloan to-night, and will undoubtedly return to his home at a late hour. Lay in wait for him on a back street, and work in silence. Should you fail in this way, go to his room; after which fire the building. But use no weapon but the dagger.

DeL. It is well. I will do it for five thousand dollars, part in hand, and the balance before two o'clock in the morning.

Sim. Your figures are too high. Be moderate.

DeL. Very well. Then I will go. (*rrising*)

Sim. (*rising*) Your price is set abominably high, but I will give it. Here is five hundred as a guarantee of good faith, and I will meet you at the west bridge, at two o'clock in the morning, with the balance. (*hands roll of bills*)

DeL. Good. The deed shall be done. (*Exit*, L. 2 E.

Sim. (*fiendishly*) Ah, Herbert Honeyton, your fate is sealed. Now to outwit Philip Darbeen, and Evalena and her legacy of millions will be mine. (C.)

(*Closed in with street scene in 1st grooves, which is*

SCENE II.—*Street.*

Enter PHILIP DARBEEN, R.

Philip. I have had many intricate cases to unravel during my experience as a detective, but for a simple one, none so mysterious as the present. It is said woman's wit exceeds man's wisdom, and, by Jove, I believe it. No sooner do I find a clew than it is again lost. Were it not for my love for Julia and Herbert's friendship, I would drop this case in disgust.

Enter HERBERT, L.

Herbert. Why, Philip, I thought you were in Chicago? (*shake hands*)

Philip. Yes, I was there, but you see I have returned.

Her. (*anxiously*) And with what success?

Philip. I succeeded in ascertaining where your sister resided, but no sooner had I done so than she disappeared, and I am led to believe she is now in this city.

Her. And you will continue the search?

Philip. Yes; for I believe with you that she is in the hands of some villain—although, perhaps, a willing slave. It is our duty, therefore, to find her, and set her on the right path again.

Her. And I hope you may be successful. Meanwhile report new developments in the case to me regularly. Good day.

(*crosses, and exit* R.

Philip. (*watching him off*) At any rate he does not hope for success more than I do, for I am in love with the girl, yet I suppose it is a hopeless passion. (*turns to* L.

Enter PETER, L.

Peter, I am glad to find you. Did you ever do any detective work?

Peter. Oh, yes; I detected a feller about your make-up, de oder day, kissing de black-eyed milliner in de shop down de way here.

Philip. Now, Peter!

Peter. Why dat am nothing, boss, for I do that myself whenever I git a chance. (*smacks lips*) But you look pretty well, boss.

Philip. Well, Peter, I can not return the compliment.

Peter. I think you can.

Philip. How so?

Peter. By telling as big a lie as I did!

Philip. I take the hint.

Peter. Say, do you know any skhin-nun-drums?

Philip. Yes, a few.

Peter. Den tell me why dey killed off all der dogs during the dog days last summer?

Philip. Did they kill them all, Peter?

Peter. Yes, all of 'em

Philip. Then how did they miss you?

Peter. (*a little confused*) Ah! yeah! eh! You see dey spent all de time trying to find you!

Philip. And still they failed. But I understand you attend Sunday school regularly now. How do you get along there?

Peter. Very well, sah.

Philip. What have you learned at the school?

Peter. Not much of anything; only de way de female teachers bang and frizz, and curl, and switch, and stack their hair, and make smashers on de good looking male teachers. And last Sunday I learned 'bout Sollermum, who had a million wives, or more.

Philip. King Solomon, the wisest man known in history?

Peter. Yes, Ole King Sollermum, de biggermist. But I don't tink he was very wise though.

Philip. And why, Peter?

Peter. Because yer see no wise man would think of having such a jamberee as a million wives around him. No-sar-ee! A wise man would be content wid one wife, and if he could stand more racket he would start a dozen boiler shops or so, dat he could shut down when he didn't feel well, or wanted to go to sleep. No-sar-ee! Sollermun was no *wise man!*

Philip. Yes he was, Peter. Do you remember the verdict he rendered when the two women claimed the same child? (PETER *nods affirmingly*) Well, that showed wisdom.

Peter. Hang me'f it does! Why dats de most foolish piece of business I ever heard of. Did any sound person ever think of such a thing as to cut a chile in two, jes' for ter settle a dispute? No-sar-ee! Why, what would be de good of a half chile? None at all. I wouldn't give a blown-out cigar stub for a million half chiles. And why? 'Cause dey's no 'count, nohow. But if he'd left de chile alone I might have give him my chance at de bar in a general roundabout of free drinks for de house for it, an' dat would be considerable, considering his family circumstances.

Philip. Ah, Peter, you don't see the point in question. You mistake the——

Peter. Oh, go long wid de point! I reckon I knows what I knows, and sees what I sees! You can't talk wid me when it comes to Sunday school business, for I'se got dat down fine! Why, jes' look at it as it is. Whar a man like Sollermun, who's got at least *seven million chiles*, a chile more or less is of no conserkense, 'speshly whar it will settle a dispute between two women who, I spose, belonged to de sewing circle for de benefit of de heathen. No-sar-ee! A chile in such a case is a mighty good investment! Course it's different wid you, who'll never have mor'n three or four dozen, but wid Sollermun it was no konserkense.

Philip. Peter, you are going too far in your assertions, in consequence I will admit the case in dispute in your favor. But will you assist me in a little job of detective work?

Peter. I'll take a job of detectin' if you'll strike out de *work* clause.

Philip. Very well. Do you know the lady of whom this is a likeness? (*producing photo*)

Peter. (*examing it*) Oh, yas. She war to ole skin-flint Simon's office widin de last hour.

Philip. Are you sure?

Peter. (*indignant*) Say, boss, when dis chile says a thing, that thing am said! Fack! You don't mistook me for a pill-peddler, did you?

Philip. I believe you, Peter. Now, what I desire you to do, is to ascertain where this lady resides, and what business she transacted at Simon's office, and report the same to me. I will pay you well for actual service.

Peter. All right, boss, I'll do her.

Philip. Then I will meet you here to-morrow evening for your report. Meanwhile, work shrewdly. (*goes up*)

Peter. I'se your huckleberry, boss. (PHILIP *exits*, L.) Golly, I'se a detect! Wonder what my gal Sal will say now. Guess I'll go and buy a can of black sardines and gib her, since fortune strikes this way. Wonder what comes next. (*Exit*, R.

SCENE III.—SLOAN'S *Parlor—mountings to suit convenience of stage —center table* R. C. *Necessary chairs.* EVALENA *seated at table in deep thought.*

Evalena. Oh, Herbert! Herbert! if you only knew how sincerely I love you, and the motives that prompted me to forsake you, then —then you might forgive me. (*rising*) But I will be true to you, Herbert. When Simon comes for his bride he will find her the bride of death instead. Oh, Herbert! our wedding will be on the other side of the dark and mystical river, where fiends never enter to disturb the calm and placid waters.

Enter HERBERT, L.

Evalena. (*shrinks towards* R., *exhibiting fear and anguish*) Oh, Herbert!

Her. (*advancing, speaking quickly*) Evalena, dear! why this state of alarm? Do I enter so unexpectedly?

Evalena. No, no, Herbert! I cannot see you! I must not! Go!

Her. My fair commander, before I comply with such orders I must know the reason for them. Come, Evalena, what has happened that you receive me thus?

Evalena. Oh, Herbert, I have played you false, and must not see you hereafter. Henceforth we must be as strangers to each other.

Her. Impossible! Impossible! What has shaken your faith in me, that you thus cast me off?

Evalena. My faith in you is as firm as ever; but to-day I was compelled, for certain reasons, to promise to wed John Simon. Do not question me further, but leave me.

Her. Do you mean to say you received an offer of marriage from John Simon, and accepted it?

Evalena. Yes. But I did not accept willingly. On account of certain foul reasons I was forced to consent.

Her. Foul reasons! I do not understand. Pray explain, for this

suspense is terrible to me. Come, Evalena, tell me all, for I cannot believe that you have conscientiously cast me off for John Simon.

Evalena. I cannot tell you, Herbert—you must interview father for these reasons.

Her. Then call him immediately.

Evalena. I will; but remember fate has separated us, and we must abide by its decree.

Her. (*forcibly*) Fate be hanged! In this case I will not abide by its decree, though a thousand John Simons were against me. (*exit* EVALENA, R.) "Foul reasons!" What can the girl mean! Evidently this is another of John Simon's plots. But this time I will follow him through it.

Enter SLOAN, R.

Sloan. Good day, Herbert.

Her. Good day, sir.

Sloan. Evalena said you desired to see me. (*both sit*)

Her. Yes, I desire to make some inquiries concerning a case which interests me deeply. You are aware, Mr. Sloan, that for some time I have been waiting upon your daughter—that we were engaged to be married; to-night, however, when I called, she informed me that our proposed relationship must not be thought of in the future, as this afternoon she was forced, on account of certain foul reasons, to accept John Simon. For an explanation of these reasons she directed me to you. You now know why I desired an interview.

Sloan. Herbert, this is an intricate and mysterious affair, and should not be transmitted to any one; but if you will promise to use the information with proper discretion I will explain it to you.

Her. You can rest assured as to that, Mr. Sloan.

Sloan. Well, the case cannot be made worse. I have every confidence in you. The facts are that John Simon claims that I was connected with a Baltimore tragedy, which occured many years ago, and that he has proofs in his possession, which if revealed, would condemn me to death. Now he threatens to have me punished for that crime, of which I know nothing, only that circumstantial evidence was against me at the time, if Evalena will not consent to marry him. So in order to save me she sacrificed herself.

Her. And what was the tragedy, pray?

Sloan. Ah, Herbert, I cannot tell you that— I must not.

Her. And are you innocent?

Sloan. Can you doubt my innocence—do you doubt it? Oh, Herbert, believe me—as sure as there is a Supreme Ruler I am innocent, but I cannot prove it in opposition to John Simon.

Her. I do not doubt your innocence, Mr. Sloan. But have you made no attempt to prove it? Have you not consulted detective aid?

Sloan. No, I have no clue, and I have feared publicity.

Her. Do you know the nature of Simon's evidence against you?

Sloan. All the evidence I know of is his old book-keeper, and he is in foreign countries—perhaps dead.

Her. There you are mistaken, for he has returned to this city within the last few days. With your permission, Mr. Sloan, I will lay this case before Philip Darbeen, one of my warmest friends, and see if he cannot ferret out a result that will prove your innocence.

Sloan. But suppose the tables should turn against me?

Her. Doubt not. Philip will, at my request, work for your benefit. And as sure as you are innocent you shall triumph.

Sloan. Ah, Herbert, you do not know the nature of John Simon's opposition. But do as you will—I can do nothing myself. I trust you; and if you can clear this mystery, rest assured you shall be well recompensed.

Her. The recompense I would ask, Mr. Sloan, would be a great one, namely, your daughter.

Sloan. With all my heart, Herbert.

Her. Then I must go and see Philip at once. Make Evalena acquainted with the import of our interview, and tell her that, although contrary to her expostulations, I will call on her at my first opportunity. Remain in good spirits, Mr. Sloan, and all will yet be righted. Good evening, sir. (*Exit*, L.

Sloan. The old book-keeper has returned, and now Philip Darbeen, the shrewdest of western detectives, will be placed on Simon's trail. Ah, John Simon, you may yet receive your just reward.

(*Closed in with*

SCENE IV.—*Street in 1st grooves—stage half dark. Music pp. Thunder and lightning, after which, enter very excitedly with an enormous sham detective's badge on his coat in front,*

PETER, R.

Peter. Golly! I believe dis chile am struck by thunder an' lightnin', for I feel de shock of de magnet all fru my physical institooshun. (*shivers*) Dat war a mighty hard stroke she struck dat time. It beat de blow my gal Sal gub me de udder day. But I must go down an' see her now, an' den I must hunt up de lilly-white gal for de detect. I wonder if he aint gone sweet on her? If so, he shall hab her. Dese gals are mighty hard to do wid. De udder day as I an' Sal, an' Sal's No. 12 cowhides, was walkin' down street, we came by a jerooralry shop; an' dar war rings, an' bracelets, and breast-pins, an' ear-drops, an' jerooralry of all kinds hangin' in de window of dat 'ar jerooralry shop, an' Sal says to me, says she: "Pete, go buy dem." Well, I did—*I went right by dem.* But I guess I'll go an' see her now. (*goes* L., *when lightning and thunder, he stops, exhibiting fear*) Dis am a hard night to be out in. Wonder if I hadn't better go home? (*looks off* L.—*steps back*) Hokey pokey! an' who am dis comin'? By de curlin'-irons in Sal's head, an' it's de gal I'se detectin'! Guess I'll take observashuns an' get to business. (*struts around stage, when*

Enter L., JULIA, *heavily wrapped.*

Good evening, Miss. (*bows low—*JULIA *not heeding, passes on* R. *and exits*) Well! she am high-strung, shuah! (*looking* R.) Guess somethings afoot. Radder tink dis chile will follow. (*Exit*, R.

Thunder and lightning, when enter, wearing rain-coat and southwester, DELEON, L.

DeL. It's a stormy night, but good for me. (*heavy peal of thunder and flash of lightning.* LELEON, R.) Hope the fellow will come soon,

then five thousand will be mine, and I'll retire from business and go to Spain, and lead a life of pleasure. Ha, ha, ha! (*Here produce as heavy a peal of thunder and flash of lightning as possible, from which* DeLeon *is stunned and falls senseless to stage,* R. *Continue rumbling of thunder at the discretion of manager throughout the scene. Shortly after* DeLeon *is stunned, enter, well wrapped up, so as not to be readily recognized*

JOHN SIMON, L., *stops* L.

Sim. The thought of the deed that to-night will be perpetrated makes it impossible for me to rest, therefore I will be around and see how things will go, and possibly be of some assistance. Ah, Herbert, you should not have interfered with me. (*paces stage to* R., *discovers* DeLeon) Ah, who is this? Surely not Herbert! (*stoops to examine—arises*) DeLeon, as I live! Is it possible? Can it be possible that they have met, and that he has slain my trusty DeLeon? (*takes a position a la fiend*) If so, John Simon, your hand in the game is called upon. I must go to Herbert's room and ply the dagger myself. My knowledge of the weapon will now be of service. But I gave this fellow five hundred dollars this afternoon—must secure the money if it is about his person. (*stoops and examines* DeLeon's *pockets*) Ah! here it is. (*presents package of money. Continues searching—feels over breast pocket—draws forth small leather packet containing documents*) What can this be? Evidently some treasure. I will keep it, and examine it at a more opportune time. It may be worth the while. (*puts packet in pocket—rises*) Now for Herbert's room. (*Exit* R.

Shortly after Simon *exits* DeLeon *regains his senses. This must be performed with keen judgment, in order to appear natural.*

DeL. (*rising*) Why did I lay there? I feel queer. (*rubs limbs*) What happened me? (*light thunder peal*) Must have been "thunder struck." Suppose Herbert's gone home now. Must go to his room and see. (*Exit* R.—*Change to*

SCENE V.—*Apartment—beadstead upper* L. *corner, with hangings around it. Chair near* L. *Stage dark. If practical have window* R., *through which* Simon *and* DeLeon *enter. Thunder and lightning, when, with dagger between teeth,*

Enter through window, R., JOHN SIMON.

Sim. (*clock in rear of scene strikes twelve.* Simon *startled by it*) He must be in bed. (*approaches bed stealthily, when enter through window* R., *in same manner,* DeLeon; *he makes a slight noise, which attracts* Simon's *attention, who, supposing him to be* Herbert, *seizes him, with knife drawn, and knife battle ensues, in which* Simon *slays* DeLeon. *During the battle thunder and lightning. Tremolo music. After the combat* Simon *takes* C. *of stage*) The deed in done! Victory, Evalena and legacy of millions are mine! Now to conceal the act by firing the house, and all will be well! (*light red fire at wings*) (*Exit* Simon, R.

QUICK CURTAIN.

ACT II.

SCENE I.—SIMON'S *Office as in Act 1st, Scene 1st.*

Enter PETER, L.

Peter. Dis heah detect business am gettin' mighty interestin', considerin' I'se only been at it a day. I 'spect de boss an' de lilly-white gal will meet heah pretty soon, so I'll just play hide-an'-seek wid 'em. (*goes towards table*) Hide from dar eyes an' seek from dar hearts—dat is if dey hab any. (*gets under table*)

Enter SIMON, L., *note in hand.*

Sim. Julia has requested an interview. What can it mean? Can it be possible that my engagement to Evalena has been made known to her? If so I must work shrewdly to foil her.

Peter. (*aside*) Go slow, ole fellow, for you can't foil me, de boss detect.

Enter JULIA, L.

Julia. How good of you, miserable villain, to meet me so promptly!

Sim. Ah, Julia dear, what means this compliment?

Julia. Can you ask? dare you ask, when the news of your engagement to Evalena Sloan is spread over the entire city, and I am your legal wife?

Peter. (*aside*) Golly; ole skin flint am married! Oughter be ashamed! But I'se de detect.

Sim. And you believe such street gossip?

Julia. I did not at first, but I am forced to now. Oh, John! John! what does this mean? Why will you not make our union known? I cannot bear this suspense any longer—now or never. (*sinks into chair*)

Peter. (*aside*) It am known to Peter, the detect.

Sim. Julia, dear, you surprise me! I do not understand what you mean. Our marriage shall be made known as soon as certain business transactions of mine are settled. The story of my engagement to Evalena is false—simply a blackmailing scheme. And now I wish you would go back to Chicago, and thereby foil Philip Darbeen's plans.

Peter. (*aside*) Can't foil mine though, ole skin-flint.

Julia. (*rising, and indignantly*) Never! never! You are evading me! I have proofs to the contrary of your assertions! I will go immediately to Philip Darbeen and tell him all! Yes, all! (*going* L.

Sim. (*in rage, and suddenly*) Never! (*draws dagger*) Or you shall regret the telling. Do as I say and all will be well; refuse, and I will carve out your contaminative heart where you stand, rather than be foiled and ruined.

Julia. (*defiantly*) Ah, villain though you are, you dare not murder me!

Sim. (*stepping forward*) Dare not! What should prevent me?

Peter. (*springs from under table, draws two revolvers, and aims at* SIMON) Dose two rebolbers—in de hands of Peter, de detect! Young

gal, you git, for yer kalliker's not safe here. (*exit* JULIA, L.) Ole hoss, drop dat 'ar knife! (SIMON *not obeying*) Drop it, I say! (*covering him with revolvers.* SIMON *drops dagger.* PETER *goes* L., *when* SIMON *stoops to pick up dagger; as* SIMON *rises,* PETER *whirls, presenting revolvers again*) No you don't, boss, or de slugs in dese har re-bolber's 'll go hard wid you. (SIMON *drops dagger. Business repeated. This time* SIMON, *with dagger upraised, rushes after* PETER, *who, when at* L. *wing, falls on one knee presenting pistols over shoulders at* SIMON *and looking back*) Drap it! (SIMON *obeys,* PETER *rises*) Now look heah, boss, you pick up dat 'ar dagger an' git; I'll keep house while you're gone.

Sim. Curse your impudence, you meddlesome fool! (*exit,* L.

Peter. Fool! Yes, but I'se too much of a Sollermun for you, boss. (*laughs*) Golly! I caught him nice, an' dey waren't loaded at all. (*snaps revolvers*) No, sir; nary load. Guess I'll go an' see de detect now, an' get new instructions. (*exit,* L.

Enter SIMON, C.

Sim. Things are becoming extremely warm now. Curse the luck! I wonder how much that darkey heard, and what he was prowling around for? The only course left me now is an early marriage with Evalena, and to throw off Julia by proving our union *illegal.* I must call on Evalena and have the ceremony take place this evening, before public scandal is aroused. One good thing in my favor now is the midnight deed of last night. Herbert, at least, will not interfere now. The marriage knot once tied, my money and position will defy the world and its detectives! (R. C.)

Enter HERBERT, R.

Her. Ah, good morning, Simon!

Sim. (*staggering* R., *in surprise and fear*) Herbert! Herbert! Is it possible?

Her. Possible—what?

Sim. (*aside*) What can this mean? (*aloud*) I have been informed—that—that—you had set fire to your house last night, and then committed suicide, and I was about to go and learn the particulars—and now, as the theologians have it, you "materialize" so suddenly that it surprises me, even as did the news of your untimely death.

Her. Ha, ha, ha! that's a good one! Why, where did you get that gossip from? My house is burned, but, as you see, I am still among the living.

Sim. (*aside*) This is puzzle. (*aloud*) Your house? I rather think it was mine, for to-day I shall foreclose my mortgage against your home—so you will now take notice accordingly. And I shall not need your services hereafter.

Her. (*coolly*) Does this come from the fact that we are rivals in love?

Sim. Question me not, and the space you occupy is at present of more value to me than your presence. Go!

Her. I will. But remember, John Simon, that the time may come when the space *you* now occupy may be held by your humble servant. And you need not trouble yourself with the foreclosing of the spoken-of mortgage, for *I hold that!*

Sim. The devil! How came you by it?

Her. A few days since, my uncle, whom we all supposed dead, returned from the gold mines of Australia, where he has become rich, and, upon learning my financial situation, purchased the mortgage of your attorney and presented it to me. He also thinks your administration of my father's estate was not correct. I may call on you for a settlement soon. Till then, adieu! (*Exit*, L.

Sim. What can all this mean? I am positively certain that I killed a man in Herbert's room last night. But whom could it have been? Oh, can it be possible that DeLeon was the victim? Yes, yes, it must be so, for he has not been found to-day. He must have been unconscious on the street from some cause, and after awakening came to the room. Yes, that must be the way, a *midnight mistake*, that will forever haunt me! And now to make the case more dubious, Herbert's uncle, my old book-keeper, has returned. But what care I—let them come! My trail is smoothed out! But I found a packet in DeLeon's pocket last night. I wonder what it contains? (*takes packet from pocket, undoes it, takes out paper and reads*)

"To whom this may concern:—My true and real name is Joseph Simondale, son of Frank and Mary Simondale, of Dover, England, and whom I have not seen since I was seven years old. At that time I accompanied my parents and elder brother, John, on a voyage to France, on which voyage we were shipwrecked. Since then I have seen neither my parents nor brother. When the ship was dashed to pieces I was carried away on a piece of the wreck, from which I was picked up by a gang of Spanish sea pirates, who named me Jose DeLeon, and reared me to the life I have since led. I came to America in the year 1874, and have since been engaged in many acts of crime. Should any person, into whose hands this may come, know aught of my parents or brother, providing they were saved, he would confer a favor by forwarding them this packet, and informing them of my death, thereby fulfilling the last prayer of a miserable wretch.

Joseph Simondale, *alias* Jose DeLeon."

Great Heavens! my brother! and killed by my hand! "*A Midnight Mistake*," unpardonable in heaven and on earth! Simondale was our family name, and the one that I bore until I emigrated to America. And so Joseph was also saved from that fatal wreck, only to fall a prey to the whims of his brother. Oh, what a villain I must be! This deed drives me wild! And then to think of the many similar ones heaped upon my head—all—all—for the love of gold! *Gold! that burneth out my very vitals!* Oh! were I only as innocent of crime as I was on the night of that fatal shipwreck that forever separated me from the kind, loving, warning admonitions of a christian mother, I would forever remain so. Oh, mother! mother! come down from your heavenly exalted position but one moment to your despisable son, and help him to regain his youthful innocence! But, no! Too late! Yes, yes; it is too late. The die is cast. I am lost—lost—lost. But why these foolish meditations, when I have so much to divert my mind. I will go and bid Evalena prepare for a speedy marriage to take place to-night. After that I care not a fig for their prosecutions. (*Exit* L.—*Closed inby*

SCENE II.—*A street.*

Enter PHILIP DARBEEN, R.

Philip. How startling events crowd upon me. The life of a detective is full of exciting incidents. Who would have thought that the peaceful appearing broker and manufacturer, John Simon, had ever been connected with a tragedy. But such is evidently the case, judging from discoveries that I have made. And to add further astonishment, Simon has made up his mind to marry Evalena Sloan, my friend Herbert's betrothed. But I guess I'll stop that scheme, and perhaps Herbert will speak a good word for me to his sister. But I must find my assistant, the darkey, and ascertain if he has made any discoveries. (*goes* L.) Ah, here he comes.

Enter PETER, L.

Philip. Peter, I was just now looking for you.

Peter. Well, I'se heah! Say, boss, dey tell me you am de best detect in de west.

Philip. Is that so?

Peter. Yeah, dat am so. But say, when it comes to de point, I'se probably de next best, eh?

Philip. Probably. But have you made any discoveries in the case I gave you yesterday?

Peter. Discoveries? Well, I should smile I has.

Philip. And with what result?

Peter. Result 'nuff. Say, you know de gal?

Philip. What girl?

Peter. De gal I'se detectin'!

Philip. Certainly.

Peter. Yeah, I thought so. Say, am you not gone a little sweet on her? that is to say, so sweet dat by spillin' a barrel of sour acid vinegar down yer throat, sweet honey-kisses would still be left for her, eh?

Philip. Well, what if I should be so sweet?

Peter. Don't you be it any more, boss.

Philip. And why?

Peter. Because, judgin' from de awful solemnity of my important callin' as subordinate detect, it am again de law ob de lan', an' de order ob de pulpit, to be sweet on anodder man's wife.

Philip. What, is she truly married?

Peter. Dat am about de size ob it, boss, accordin' to my observations, an' dey are many an' far between.

Philip. (*anxiously*) And with whom is she married?

Peter. Why, to—to—to—*to a man!* ob course! Say, boss, you am pretty badly gone. You better take a little "spirit" wine. (*laughs*)

Philip. Peter, lay aside this burlesque parlance, and make a speedy report of your commission, or I'll discharge you.

Peter. Well, you see I went down to Simon's office dis mornin', an' happened to crawl under de table. Bymby ole skin-flint come in, an' bymby de gal come in an' commence givin' him particular thunder for goin' sweet on anodder gal, when she war his legal honeysuckle; an' she wanted skin-flint to tell people dat they were

married, which he wouldn't do. Den she got her dander up an' said she'd tell Philip Darbeen, who I spec' is yourself, when Simon got mad an' drawed a big knife, about so long, (*measures burlesquely by spreading arms*) an' I don't know what might have been done if I hadn't been dar wid my two rebolbers, de lor' only knows what might have happened. Oh, I tell you I'se had a skirmish, I has.

Philip. And so Julia is married to John Simon?

Peter. Sartingly! You didn't suppose she was married to me or you, did yer?

Philip. No, sir; nor to a Frenchman, if you like.

Peter. Frenchman! What's dat?

Philip. Why, a man of course.

Peter. Den why do you call him French?

Philip. Because he is a native of France, and speaks the French language.

Peter. Dat's kind o' skurious. But what do you mean by de French language.

Philip. I mean French, and nothing else. It is a language by itself, that one can't understand unless he has learned it.

Peter. Dat am skurious. Why, dar isn't any sense in dat.

Philip. As much sense as in our language.

Peter. Can't see dat point.

Philip. It is plain enough. The different nations have different languages, and one can't understand the other until they have learned their languages.

Peter. Why, dat's de most ridikolus thing I ever heard of. Dar's no day light in dat at all.

Philip. Now look here, Peter; you will admit that a cow can talk to a cow?

Peter. Yes.

Philip. And a cat can talk to a cat?

Peter. Yes.

Philip. And a horse can talk to a horse?

Peter. Yes.

Philip. But a horse can't talk to a cow or cat, nor a cow or cat to a horse?

Peter. No. But a cow can talk to an ox an' be *understood!*

Philip. That's in her own nation, and comes natural. Well, now you can see it is plain and correct for one nation to speak different from another?

Peter. Blame me if I can. Dar isn't any point. Now you look har, boss—is a Frenchman a cow?

Philip. No.

Peter. Or a cat?

Philip. No.

Peter. Or a horse?

Philip. No.

Peter. Well den, is he a man?

Philip. Yes, he is a man.

Peter. Well, den, dog-on-it, why don't he talk like a man? Tell me dat!

Philip. Oh, you are too stupid to understand anything.

Peter. Probably I am, but you can't learn me anything 'bout languages.

Philip. Well, I must go. Come to my office at exactly seven o'clock, this evening, as I may need you then. Meanwhile keep a shadowing eye on John Simon. Good-bye. (*Exit*, L.

Peter. Well, you're a dead-goner, boss, an' so am I. Guess I'll go down and see Sal now. (*here introduce darkey love song appropriate to the occasion, after which* PETER *exit*, R.—*Music*)

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE I.—SLOAN'S *parlor as in Act 1st, Scene 3d.*

Enter EVALENA, L., *elegantly attired.*

Evalena. To-night is the time set for my marriage to John Simon. How miserable life seems! I have lived in hopes of something to occur to stay this sinful act, but in vain. Must I be led to the altar for sacrifice like a dumb brute? To save father I must.

Enter SLOAN, L.

Sloan. Evalena, has not Simon arrived?

Evalena. No; and I hope he will not. But, father, before I give myself to this base fiend, you must inform me of the nature of the crime for which Simon holds you accountable, and for the redemption of which I am a sacrifice.

Sloan. It is a tragedy of a severe kind, the nature of which you shall know soon, but I cannot inform you now. Yesterday I left the case with Philip Darbeen, for him to ferret out the truth in the affair if possible. And as the only witness in the case is now in the city, I entertain hopes of a successful termination and the establishing of my innocence. Therefore spare me the painful act of informing you till, at least, the bitter end.

Evalena. Would to Heaven that he could prove your innocence ere it be too late.

Enter SIMON, L.

Sim. Ah, good evening. Am I late? I have just been to the parsonage and made arrangements for the ceremony; so, Evalena, if you are ready we will go there immediately. Mr. Sloan, you will of course accompany us, as I wish you for one of the witnesses.

Evalena. Mr. Simon, can we not postpone the ceremony until to-morrow evening?

Sim. Impossible! as I must leave the city to-morrow on business, and may be gone a week; besides, there is no reason for delay.

Sloan. John Simon, the ceremony shall not be performed before to-morrow evening, at least, and possibly not then.

Sim. What do you mean, sir?

Sloan. I mean just what I say! It is but just that you favor my daughter in at least this one desire. Yesterday she sacrificed her fondest hopes to you, and now you should sacrifice this whim of yours to her.

Sim. There is no sense in that, considering the situation. Evalena, if you will get ready we will go to the parsonage at once.

Enter PHILIP, L.

Philip. Ah, Simon, I have been searching for you during the past hour, but surely did not expect to find you here. Mr. Sloan, I called to see you, but must now postpone that visit, as I have business with Simon.

Sim. Sir, I am not at liberty for business this evening. You will please call at my office in the morning.

Philip. (*smiling, and gently tapping him on the shoulder*) My good sir, it would please me to comply with your request, but my business with you is of so grave an import as to necessitate a settlement at once.

Sim. Well, what the deuce is it?

Philip. It is simply this, that I have two warrants here (*producing papers*)

Enter HERBERT, L., *unobserved by* SIMON.

for your arrest. One, issued upon the order of your old book-keeper, charging you with embezzlement in the Honeyton estate, of which you were administrator; and the other, issued upon the order of your humble servant, as detective for Harry Sloan, charging you with the murder of Arthur Winslow, the millionaire of Baltimore, eighteen years ago. (HERBERT *crosses to* EVALENA, R., *puts arm around her waist, partly facing audience*)

POSITIONS.

SIMON L. EVALENA R. HERBERT L. *of* EVALENA. PHILIP R., *and rear of* SIMON. SLOAN *rear of* C.

Philip. Therefore, in the name of the people of this state, you are my prisoner! (*business of fear by* SIMON)

Her. (*raising* L. *hand and pointing at* SIMON) John Simon, "*the space you occupy is at present of more value to me than your presence—go!*"

Sim. It is false! false! and I can prove to the contrary! I defy you to arrest me on such charges!

Philip. But you do not pretend to claim that you have not exercised a fiendish influence over Harry Sloan during the past eighteen years, and that now, through this influence, you were trying to force his daughter to marry you. I have the whole case, and you are doomed. On the night of November 9th, eighteen years ago, you murdered and robbed Arthur Winslow, at Baltimore, and finding Harry Sloan, in an intoxicated and insensible condition, undoubtedly brought on by your villainy, you placed him, sprinkled with blood, knife in hand, by the side of your victim. Then you took your book-keeper into your confidence, and in company with him went to the scene of horror, and with proper restoratives restored Sloan to consciousness, and to realize his horrible position. Sloan believed himself guilty at the time, and you forced him further into the belief on account of circumstantial evidence. You, however, hid the crime from the authorities on condition that Sloan should perform certain acts for you, the nature of which I have as yet not learned. Since then you have continued holding him your slave.

Sloan. The truth at last—thank Heaven!

Sim. It is false! I will immediately go and arrange a defence! (*going*)

Philip. (*stopping him*) Not so fast, my good man. Remember you are my prisoner. You can prove nothing to the contrary of what I say, for here (*presenting more documents*) I have copy of affidavits in the case, made by your old book-keeper, and other documents taken by him last night from your safe, upon which you undoubtedly rely for a defence.

Sloan. Ah, John Simon, you are outwitted at last. Now freedom will once more be mine.

Her. John Simon, "*I shall not need your services hereafter!*"

Sim. (*to* HERBERT) The devil take you and your impudence! (*to* PHILIP) From my safe did you say? Impossible; he could not enter it.

Philip. He knew the combination from olden times. But come, we must go and leave these people to their joy.

Sim. Then I am indeed ruined and disgraced. But no! (*hastily draws dagger from breast pocket, with suicidal intentions.* PHILIP *catches his arm.* EVALENA *shows fear.* PHILIP *disarms* SIMON)

Philip. No, none of that while in my care. Probably I had better put the bracelets on you. (*handcuffing him*) Now we are ready to travel.

Peter. (*outside,* L.) Dis way, Miss Julia; I thinks dey am in de parlor.

Enter PETER *and* JULIA, L.

Peter. (*to* PHILIP) Hello, boss! I didn't 'spect to find you here. (*discovers* SIMON) What, ole skin-flint, have dey got de bracelets on you? (*examines*) What a pity de ole fellow down dar (*pointing downward*) hain't got his chain fastened onto dem, an' his crew to haulin'.

When JULIA *enters she rushes to* HERBERT, *throws her arms around his neck, &c., sobbing.*

Julia. Brother! brother! can you ever forgive me?

Her. (*gently releasing her*) I forgave you long since, Julia, and have searched for you. But your betrayer I will never forgive.

Julia. (*discovering* SIMON) What, you miserable wretch here? Begone! and never again cross my path.

Philip. Miss Honeyton, your desire shall be complied with. Peter, take John Simon to jail.

Sim. Julia, I shall never forget you. In my darkest hour I will remember you, and believe me, I would have arranged all for the best.

Julia. Begone! foul imp of Satan!

Sim. (*aside*) All misery the result of that fatal *Midnight Mistake!* (*aloud*) To you, Herbert Honeyton, I owe this degradation. Remember, to you! And when I gain my liberty your worthless carcass shall suffer the penalty!

Peter. Say, ole fellow, it's about time for us to travel, or your hotel may be closed for de night.

Sim. Yes. Good-bye, Julia, Evalena, Sloan and Herbert; we will meet again. (*Exit* SIMON *and* PETER, L.

Philip. He is now safe for the balance of his years. A victim of the love of gold and avarice.

Sloan. (*taking* PHILIP'S *hand*) My dear Darbeen, I cannot enough thank you for your service in setting me at liberty from the shadows that have enshrouded my life for eighteen years.

Philip. No thanks, sir. It is my profession.

Julia. And I feel that I owe to you the gratitude of a life-time, and which I can never repay.

Philip. Ah, Miss Honeyton, there you are mistaken. You *must* recompense me, although the boon I ask is a great one.

Julia. How?

Philip. (*taking her hand in his*) By extending to me your heart and hand, and becoming a helpmeet unto me in the trials of life that are to follow.

Julia. You surprise me. Remember I am not yet divorced from John Simon, so for an answer you must wait.

Her. Do not let him wait long, Julia, for he is a noble boy.

Evalena. And is the cause of all our happiness, as John Simon was of our misery.

Sloan. And now, kind friends, while we are all assembled, I wish to make another startling revelation. I have never committed but one act contrary to law, and it is that I now wish to confess. Evalena, to you I appeal for mercy and forgiveness. You are not my daughter, but the daughter of Arthur Winslow, the murdered millionaire, of Baltimore. When you were but a child, one year of age, Simon forced me, under penalty of death, to kidnap you from your home of luxury and comfort, and rear you; that when you became of sufficient age he might marry you, and by proving your heirship to the Winslow estate, come into possession of your legal property. I committed the deed, and have ever since tried to fulfil the duties of a father to you to the best of my ability. Can you forgive me?

Evalena. (*in deep emotion*) Can it be possible? Can it be true? (*goes to* SLOAN, *throws arms around his neck*) Oh, father, is it so?

Sloan. Yes, child, it is. Can you forgive me now, that I am at liberty to restore you to your true position in the world?

Evalena. Indeed I can, and will, with all my heart. You were not to blame, and you have been a kind and true father to me. But with my forgiveness I ask one favor. My father is dead you say; may I not continue calling you father, and look to you for paternal guidance as in times of yore?

Sloan. I am not worthy the honor. But with all my faults I have learned to love you with a warm paternal love, and it would be hard for me to lose you—therefore as you will.

Her. Evalena—Miss Winslow, I mean—I presume your present exalted position will not allow a continuance of our acquaintance?

Evalena. (*smiling*) Come with me into the front parlor, while I upbraid you for that address. And lest I should be too severe with you, Philip and Julia will please accompany, and we will spend an evening together, now that all is bright again. (*going* R., *with* HERBERT, *followed by* JULIA *and* PHILIP. *Exit*, R.)

Sloan. (*watching them off*) Happy couples. And I am left alone. (*Exit*, L.

CURTAIN—MUSIC.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*Park or landscape set in 3d or 4th grooves. Rustic bench or settee,* R., *close to scene. Tremolo music, when,*

Enter SIMON, L. 2 E., *dressed in dilapidated prison garb, long gray hair and beard, having the bearing and demeanor of a maniac. Footlights down.*

Sim. Ah, they would chain me, would they! and keep me from my enemy! But they could not! could not! They have offered a thousand dollars for me—dead or alive! But wait till I have revenged myself! Revenge! revenge! revenge! I must have! I have seen Herbert and Evalena walk in this park (or wood) during the past few days. If they come to-day I shall be revenged. The victim of death in that *Midnight Mistake* calls on me every night for revenge. To-day it shall come! Yes, to-day! Ha, ha, ha! Ah, the spirit of my brother, (*imagines sees spirit*) gory and ghastly, beckoning me to action! Go back and rest, brother, for the lingering rays of yon departing sun shall not have vanished in oblivion ere thy death shall be revenged! Ah! (*strikes attitude of observance*) he goes—goes—he is gone! (*looks up* R.) There they come! I knew they would. (*draws large knife*) Now to conceal myself. (*steps back of wings or if practicable, tree*)

Enter HERBERT *and* EVALENA, R., *arm in arm.*

Evalena. How lovely everything seems in this beautiful spring-time. Everything seems to join and coincide with us in our happiness.

Her. Yes, dear, Nature in her——

Enter SIMON, L., *confronting them*

Sim. Herbert Honeyton! (*chord*—SIMON *raises knife*) we have met again! (HERBERT *steps back in fear*—EVALENA *clings to him*) You have crossed my path and thwarted my plans—now for revenge! You are the cause of my degradation. Once before I sought to kill you—in your room on the night of the burning of your house, but missed you and killed my own brother, whom I had engaged to assasinate you at midnight. A fatal *Midnight Mistake*, which is the cause of my degradation through you direct. The spirit of my brother calls for revenge—I want revenge, and now I will have it! And you, (*to* EVALENA) false one, shall share his fate! Ha, ha, ha! I have them! Herbert Honeyton, say your prayers. (*dances wildly around them*)

Her. Simon, beware! or——

Sim. (*enraged*) Open not your mouth or it will shorten your existence! (*rushes at them with knife raised.* EVALENA *falls into settee. Report of gun is heard* R.; SIMON *falls to stage—dead, when*

Enter PETER, R.

With gun in position as if recently fired, big sham wooden razor protruding from back of neck, revolvers and knife tucked in belt. Takes triumphant position.

Peter. I knowed dat gun would fetch him, for I'se knowed dat 'ar gun since it war a pistol! Fack! Yes sir-ee! I war just in time, eh?

Her. (*extending hand*) Peter, I cannot sufficiently thank you for this timely deliverance from this maniacal fiend.

Peter. Oh, dat's all right, boss, for I'se de boss detect, you know. But who am de willain? He ought to have his head soaked in de town pump.

Her. It is John Simon, the victim of crime.

Peter. What, ole skin-flint Simon? Den I'se mighty rich now, for dere was a thousand dollars offered for dis job. But he's now de victim of de ole "black boss hisself," or I'se no detect.

Evalena. (*rising*) Herbert, dear, let us depart from this terrible scene of horror.

Her. Yes, we will go. Peter, will you call the coroner and have the corpse taken in charge?

Peter. Yes, sah. But now you must stick by me, so dat dey don't stretch me for dis. (*going* R.)

Her. Never fear, Peter. (PETER *exits*, R.) Ah, here comes Philip, Julia, and Mr. Sloan.

Enter PHILIP, JULIA, *and* SLOAN, R.

Philip. What horrible scene have we here?

Her. I'm glad you have come, Philip. We were attacked by John Simon, the prison fugitive—and would have been murdered, as I had no weapons—but for the timely appearance of Peter. (*all rather round* SIMON—*business of examination, &c.*)

Philip. Simon, to be sure. What a terrible fate!

Sloan. At last has the measure with which he meted been meted out to him. There is no question but that he deserved it; but it seems hard to see one of God's creatures, intended for brighter realms, fall below earthly or divine redemption, through crime and avarice.

Julia. Yes, one whom I once didst love,
Lost forever to the realms above.

Philip. Julia, dear, you are now divorced by a higher tribunal than those established by man; therefore, as there now are no ceremonial objection, I again plead my case. Will you become my wife? (*extends hand*)

Julia. If I am worthy—yes. (*gives hand—all take positions*)

Sloan. And now, kind friends, that we are all free from the terrible influence of a scheming villain, let us give thanks for our restoration and preservation to Divine Providence, and profiting by the dark example before us, that crime in all its phases, great or small, but leads to destruction, present and hereafter, strive to lead a purer life, and to consecrate ourselves to justice and the welfare of our fellow man.

Her. (*to Audience*) And if ever we, or our friends here, should, in an evil hour, be tempted to fraud and crime, may we all remember the victim of "*A Midnight Mistake.*"

CURTAIN—MUSIC.

Disposition of Characters.

JULIA R. PHILIP R. SLOAN C. SIMON C. F. HERBERT L. EVALENA L.

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127	Lick Skillet Wedding	2	2
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139	Matrimonial Bliss	1	1
69	Mother's Fool	6	1
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158	Mr. Hudson's Tiger Hunt	1	1
23	My Heart's in Highlands	4	3
208	My Precious Betsey	4	4
212	My Turn Next	4	3
32	My Wife's Relations	4	4
186	My Day and Now-a-Days	1	0
44	Obedience	1	2
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57	Paddy Miles' Boy	5	2
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195	Poor Pilicody	3	2
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171	Rough Diamond	6	3
180	Ripples	2	0
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38	The Bewitched Closet	5	2
131	The Cigarette	4	2
101	The Coming Man	3	1
167	Turn Him Out	3	3
68	The Sham Professor	4	0
54	The Two T. J's	4	2
28	Thirty-three Next Birthday	4	2
142	Tit for Tat	2	1
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5	When Woman Weep	3	2
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70	Which will he Marry	2	8
135	Widower's Trials	5	4
147	Waking Him Up	1	2
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NO		M	F
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